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Inside Chestnut

Lodge

By Hank Plante
Sentinel Staff Writer

Where would the head of the Central Intelligence Agency turn for psychiatric care? The same place as his top deputy. Although neither one of them knew it.

The late Allen W. Dulles, who was CIA director from 1953 to 1961, was too complicated and too secretive a man to pick just any hospital for his out-patient psychiatric therapy. But even Dulles, who had all the information that his position as head of the CIA would allow him, could never have guessed that his planning deputy and eventual successor, Richard Helms, would pick the same institution for the same thing.

Both super-sleuths were seeing the same psychiatrist at the same hospital on different days. That is, until the schedules got mixed up.

The day that they bumped into each other in their doctor's office could have been a scene of tension right out of "The President's Analyst." Instead, according to one senior medical official at the hospital, the repercussions were "none at all."

They were both amused, actually, but surprised of course! And there was also an element of compassion there between them.

The institution capable of drawing these esteemed patients, and many others like them, is almost an unknown as that Dulles-Helms meeting. The hospital is Rockville's Chestnut Lodge.

★★★

Spread out on an anonymous 88 acres of meadows, shade trees, gymnasiums, tennis courts and craft shops, and ranked with Topeka's Menninger Foundation, Richmond's Westbrook, Baltimore's Sheppard and Enoch Pratt, and Connecticut's Silver Hill, the lower-profiled Chestnut Lodge is the epitome of private psychiatric care -- at about \$40,000 per year per patient.

"We don't solicit the Beverly Hills crowd," the Lodge's medical director Dexter M. Bullard Jr. says. But if they did, hospital officials could boast of 25 full-time psychiatrists for its 90 beds, or of the fact that three of the 10 books most often used in the teaching

of psychiatry were written by physicians closely associated with the institution.

Keeping away from that "Beverly Hills crowd," and from any publicity at all, for that matter, has steered Chestnut's admissions staff into turning down both Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland at different times, as well as other less notables, according to high level Lodge officials.

Because it is more of a national institution than a local clinic (with only five per cent of its patients coming from the metropolitan Washington area), getting into Chestnut Lodge can take two weeks to a month of conferences, or longer.

In the case of someone like Judy Garland, for example, a Lodge psychiatrist says, "They have some sort of PR office call and try to make the arrangements, that's the way these people work."

Bullard, the medical director, adds that often the hospital's admissions officials will go out and visit the prospective patients themselves.

For the Chestnut staffers, being surrounded by persons of great notoriety of wealth in a mental institution goes unnoticed, according to one former aide, "Just the same as you wouldn't notice anyone of notoriety at an embassy party."

And like it or not, one of the things that patients at this third-generation, ex-resort hotel have paid for during the last 62 years is anonymity.

Example: When the wife of one former CIA employee had to be institutionalized, Chestnut was the place. Independent medical sources have confirmed to The Sentinel.

And that same anonymity has, over the years, drawn people like the daughter of a recent Defense Department official, the son of a 1940s

big band leader, the first wife of a still popular crooner, the corporate heir who had a reputation for getting married so often and the former Washington newspaper publisher who killed himself while on weekend leave from the Lodge.

Private planes

Likewise, rumors of kings, emperors and titular heads flying in on their private planes for sessions at Chestnut have grown through the years in Rockville's sleepy West End.

With an average patient stay of

20), Chestnut Lodge has become one of the only institutions in the world to organize itself strictly around the care of the severely disturbed -- especially acute schizophrenics.

Because of this, Chestnut has been the sometimes-disguised subject of many in-the-field reports and papers, as well as the model for the best-sellers "Lilith" written by a former occupational therapist at the Lodge, and "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden," written under a pseudonym by a former patient.

The model for the heroine-psychiatrist in "Rose Garden," who was called "Dr. Fried" in the book, in fact, was the late Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichman, whom many in the field consider to be more influential than even her one-time-husband, Erich Fromm ("The Art of Loving").

Bringing Dr. Fromm-Reichmann on the staff, and then her bringing in Scotland's noted Dr. John L. Cameron, was the shrewd work of Chestnut's great overseer and president and the man one medical friend calls "the last of the great iconoclasts," Dr. Dexter M. Bullard Sr.

It was Bullard, whose psychiatrist-father founded Chestnut and whose psychiatrist-son, Dexter Jr. is destined to take it over, who, along with his wife, Anne, has built the Lodge to its position of national esteem. At the same time the Bullards

have kept the lid on any off-grounds publicity other than the occasional suicide or false-alarm that makes the public police blotter as "500 West Montgomery Avenue."

Low publicity

In the last two years there has been only one suicide -- last summer -- and one killing -- a sheer twentieth century crime in which one patient allegedly beat another to death with an electric guitar.

Publicity, other than that, is nonexistent other than the yearly fall psychiatric symposiums which bring in 200 of the top names in the field, and the occasional cucumber sandwiches that Anne Bullard serves to surrounding Rockville neighbors.

It is this second type of community public relations that has helped Chestnut maintain its low profile and has caused an almost protective atmosphere among the surrounding neighbors.

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STATINTL

Cuba's Programs Seem to Be Working

By Sen. Claiborne Pell

Cuba, the tropical island of sugar cane and Castro-brand communism just 90 miles off U.S. shores, has changed greatly from my last trip there in December 1960.

Cuba today is a country struggling with the usual problems of undeveloped countries — poverty, hunger, inadequate housing, lack of education and health care.

But there are many signs that the elaborate social programs of the communist system there are working, and that the average Cuban working man and farmer is better off today than he was in the days before 1959 "when the revolution triumphed," as the Cuban Communists continually say.

I LAST WENT to Havana as a senator-elect from Rhode Island to see for myself what conditions were like. The Nacional Hotel where I stayed was chockablock full of "barbudas," the bearded revolutionaries in green army fatigues, most of them carrying pistols or submachine guns.

The Cuban people I met in 1960 seemed generally supportive of the Castro regime. Those who opposed the revolution had fled, died or been imprisoned.

Most of those who remained appeared genuinely relieved that the despised, rotten Batista government had been overthrown.

Back in Washington, I reported my observations to CIA Director Allen Dulles and his key advisers and suggested it would be unwise for our country to try to spark a revolt by violence in Cuba since the majority of the people either supported or were acquiescent to the Castro regime. My advice was disregarded and a few weeks later (April 1961) the Bay of Pigs invasion occurred.

LAST WEEKEND I returned to Havana with Sen. Jacob K. Javits of New York — once again to find out what conditions were like. We were received warmly by Cuban officials and met for a total of more than 10 hours with the highest government

leaders, including Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

The biggest change I noticed from 1960 was the almost complete absence of weapons and of policemen on the streets of Havana.

With the exception of Fidel and Ramon Castro, there were no more "barbudas" and only the military still wore their revolutionary battle fatigues.

Cars and trucks were in much poorer shape. Many of the cars on the road were badly deteriorated, pre-1960 American models. The modern vehicles we saw were either Russian or Japanese.

At the fishing fleet's repair port, I noticed that the new machinery was Russian-made.

IN GENERAL, the Russian influence, almost nonexistent 14 years ago, was now very apparent. Havana harbor was filled with Soviet vessels, including modern missile and fishing ships.

In Cuba today clothing and staples are rationed and prices are lower than in this country. Luxury goods, however, are very expensive.

Havana itself is a startling mixture of the old and new. In many places it has the look of a blighted American city in the process of urban renewal. In the oldest section of the city it is still possible to get an idea of the historic Spanish influence, with beautiful churches and narrow streets leading off small squares. But old Havana is decaying.

The Cubans have maintained some of the trappings of pre-revolutionary tourism. Our hotel, the Riviera, was well maintained, air-conditioned and comfortable. But the Havana Libre, once the famous Havana Hilton, has become shabby.

In some sections of Havana, the old buildings have been demolished and modern, though sparse, housing has been constructed.

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE there has been, as a matter of governmental policy, far more construction.

We visited a cattle and dairy region about 50 miles from Havana where new

modern housing, elementary school and medical clinic with a doctor and nurse. Others are being built across the island, we were told.

Our guide for this tour of the countryside was Ramon Castro, Fidel's older brother, who dresses and looks very much like the prime minister.

Their parents were once amongst Cuba's biggest sugar plantation owners, but after the revolution, they voluntarily nationalized their plantation. Ramon Castro said: "I nationalized myself. I am now just a soldier of the revolution."

THE CUBANS ARE extremely proud of the great progress they have made in education. Both the percentage of children who attend school and the rate of literacy have improved greatly since 1959, and modern schools are being built everywhere.

The Cuban government is particularly anxious to train young people with technical skills, and much of the educational system is devoted to that end.

The health care system also has been improved. After 1959 more than half of the island's 6,000 doctors fled. Today, according to Cuban figures, there are 9,000 doctors with 1,000 more being graduated each year. At present there is one doctor for every 1,000 Cubans.

SEN. JAVITS and I also visited a school being built by political prisoners. We were surprised there were only six guards for the 123 prisoners who spend their week building a branch of the university system at the prevailing Cuban wage.

We spoke with a group of the prisoners, many of whom had been imprisoned for more than 10 years. The prisoners are permitted conjugal visits to their homes one weekend a month. They were allowed visitors Sunday mornings and afternoons.

Their meals seemed adequate — a slim breakfast, as is Cuban custom, but meat or fish and beans or vegetables at the other two meals.

The prisoners confirmed it was a privilege to be allowed out in such work camps, that they volunteered to do so and that if they misbehaved, they would be returned to prison.

They said they did not have to undergo political lectures if they did not wish to. No provisions were made for church services, but those who wished to attend could do so on their monthly visits home.

IN THE CUBAN society, we were told, prostitution is pretty well eliminated.

This was quite a change since the Batista era, when there were 100,000 prostitutes in a nation of six million, or one prostitute among every 26 or 27 women.

We saw no beggars and our tips to waiters or musicians were politely refused.

Claiborne Pell
for New York Times